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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 25 June 1997 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In its capacity as Chairman of the States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), South Africa has the honour to request that the attached declaration be circulated as a document of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly under agenda item 8.

This declaration by the Ministers of SADC attending the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly represents a contribution towards the overall review and assessment of the implementation of Agenda 21, particularly as this relates to the 12 States members of SADC.

The States constituting the membership of SADC are: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

(Signed) Khiphusizi J. JELE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Declaration by the Ministers of the Southern African Development Community attending the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, held in New York from 23 to 27 June 1997

We, the Ministers of the Southern African Development Community attending the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly,

Recalling the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992,

Reiterating that the eradication of poverty in our member States and efforts to halt environmental degradation are of paramount importance,

Concerned about the increasing degradation of the global environment as a result of unsustainable production and consumption patterns as well as lifestyles,

Concerned about atmospheric pollution and its impact on the global environment, natural resources, human health and small island developing States,

Recognizing the need to integrate social and economic development and environmental protection in all decision-making to ensure a better quality of life for present and future generations,

Noting the progress achieved in the framework of recent major United Nations conferences to promote international cooperation and consensus on development and through the provisions in the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

Acknowledging the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility and other financial mechanisms,

Recognizing that global partnership and international cooperation for development are essential in achieving sustainable development, particularly through the creation of a more favourable international economic environment, and that North-South and South-South transfer of environmentally sound technologies is essential for sustainable development, and recognizing also that the fulfilment of the commitment to transfer to developing countries substantial new and additional financial resources to meet their sustainable development requirements has not materialized,

Concerned that while the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities for global environmental degradation has been accepted by all, the progress in the implementation of the commitments voluntarily undertaken at Rio de Janeiro by all countries has been disappointing,

Recognizing that while the responsibility for the implementation of Agenda 21 rests with national Governments, the efforts of developing countries have been hampered by the absence of adequate support and assistance from the international community,

Recognizing that loss of productivity in our drylands, with its resulting poverty and underdevelopment, continues to impact upon the poorest people in our region,

Concerned that the unsustainable exploitation of marine resources in the oceans of the developed countries is obliging them to seek exploitation rights in the waters of the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans,

Recognizing that water is southern Africa's most limiting natural resource,

HEREBY DECLARE THAT WE:

- Resolve to strive to eradicate poverty as an indispensable condition for sustainable development;

- State that the eradication of poverty, supported by greater equity in income distribution and human resource development, remain major challenges, especially in our member States;

- Believe that solving the basic needs of the poor, particularly food security and energy needs, would reduce problems such as deforestation and land degradation and would relieve pressure on water resources;

- Urge that the special situation and needs of the member States should be given special priority;

- Are convinced of the importance of pursuing policies of sustainable development and of managing the natural resource base in a sustainable manner;

- Call upon the developed countries to address urgently the environmental degradation caused by their unsustainable production and consumption patterns;

- Urge the developed countries to meet their commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions below the 1990 level by 2005 and to reach agreement on legally binding instruments at the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held at Kyoto, Japan, and to assist the small island developing States in implementing their action plans;

- Emphasize that North-South technology transfer and cooperation to our region should be analysed and increased, and stress that South-South technology transfer and cooperation should be promoted;

- Urge the developed countries to provide additional and predictable financial resources to meet their commitments under Agenda 21 and to

achieve the target of 0.7 per cent gross national product as official development assistance immediately, and also to ensure that within that target 0.15 per cent of gross national product is earmarked for the least developed countries, and welcome the foreign direct investment from the private and public sectors in our region;

- State that the period of five years since the 1992 Conference at Rio de Janeiro has indicated progress in some areas, but also recognize that implementation remains a great problem, especially in Africa. We reiterate the need for enhanced resources and capacity-building programmes by the United Nations system to contribute effectively to the implementation of Agenda 21;

- Reiterate our commitment to combat desertification at local, national and regional levels, and urge the international community to attach similar importance and urgency to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa as to the other recent United Nations conventions;

- Call upon the international community to support the region in the development and implementation of sustainable water management systems for the benefit of the member States;

- Urge the international community to assist member States in the management of marine ecosystems and the protection of marine resources against over-exploitation;

- As members of the Southern African Development Community therefore rededicate our commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the provisions of Agenda 21.